



**STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD  
SUBCOMMITTEE HEARING ON SECURING HIGH-DEMAND JOBS FOR VETERANS  
SUBMITTED TO THE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY  
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS  
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
February 2, 2022**

Chairman Levin, Ranking Member Moore, and Members of the Subcommittee:

We appreciate the opportunity to share our perspective on both the Veteran Employment Through Technology Education Courses (VET TEC) program and the Veterans Rapid Retraining Program (VRRAP) at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

Veterans Education Success is a nonprofit organization focused on research, policy, and advocacy to support the success of student veterans. We work on a bipartisan basis to advance higher education success for veterans, service members, and military families, and to protect the promise and integrity of the GI Bill® and other federal postsecondary education programs. Our advocacy work includes assisting veterans and military-connected students when they encounter unfair, deceptive, or abusive acts or practices by institutions of higher education.

**VET TEC**

Regarding the VET TEC program, according to a news report, more than 1,200 of approximately 2,000 veterans who have participated in the program have found employment within 67 days for an average starting salary of \$57,000.<sup>1</sup> We urge the Subcommittee to carefully monitor the job placement of the other approximately 40% of veterans participating in VET TEC to ensure veterans are successfully employed following their education.

We also urge the Subcommittee's oversight of providers selected to participate in VET TEC to ensure that predatory and low-quality providers are precluded and that only high-quality providers that are well-regarded by reputable employers are selected. For example, student veterans reported to us that Galvanize, a provider selected by VA as a VET TEC preferred

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<sup>1</sup> Jim Absher, *Who Needs College? Vets Using New GI Bill Program to Get Good-Paying Jobs*, Military.com (Nov. 3, 2021), [https://www.military.com/daily-news/2021/11/03/who-needs-college-vets-using-new-gi-bill-program-get-good-paying-jobs.html?ESRC=eb\\_211104.nl](https://www.military.com/daily-news/2021/11/03/who-needs-college-vets-using-new-gi-bill-program-get-good-paying-jobs.html?ESRC=eb_211104.nl).

provider, did not adequately inform veterans of education benefits during enrollment, threatened students who did complain, and provided subpar education, including hiring students as faculty.<sup>2</sup>

## **VRRAP**

Regarding VRRAP, we appreciate the intent of the program to provide another avenue for veterans to receive necessary retraining during the pandemic. We understand that VRRAP enrollment is lower than anticipated and that VA is sending communications to increase awareness of the program. While we support all VA programs that help veterans receive worthwhile training, unfortunately, we have heard from some veterans about concerning practices.

Specifically, one issue with VRRAP is the lack of transferability options once a veteran enrolls in a program. Veterans have only one opportunity to use up to 12 months of benefits under VRRAP and cannot transfer to another program after they enroll. Veteran Dru Macasieb testified to the US Department of Education about his experience:

*“Recently, my current school, CIAT, announced that it will transition to a 100% virtual campus in January, with less than 60 days notice. This unexpected and abrupt decision disparately impacts on-campus veterans because they will lose the housing allowance they were depending on and are prohibited from transferring to another school by the VRRAP program.”<sup>3</sup>*

Thankfully, this Subcommittee worked diligently to extend the COVID-19 protections on housing allowances under the REMOTE Act at the end of last year. But the situation of a sudden school transition to online and the inability to transfer to a new program during VRRAP illustrates the issue of veterans potentially being trapped in undesirable programs.

A more serious problem with VRRAP is that many of the approved providers listed on the VA website<sup>4</sup> have negative outcomes for students and have been subject to law enforcement actions for defrauding veterans.<sup>5</sup> Such programs should not be approved. We have received student complaints about many institutions that participate in VRRAP. While we congratulate the Subcommittee for its wise decision to withhold 25% of tuition until the veteran is successfully placed in a job, we also urge the Subcommittee to adopt careful rules excluding providers that have engaged in allegedly fraudulent practices and have terrible student outcomes.

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<sup>2</sup> See Letter to VA Requesting that it Reevaluate Galvanize, Inc.’s Status as a “Preferred” VET TEC Provider, Veterans Education Success (May 12, 2020), <https://vetsedsuccess.org/memo-to-the-department-of-veterans-affairs-requesting-that-it-reevaluate-galvanize-inc-s-status-as-a-preferred-vet-tec-provider/>.

<sup>3</sup> Dru Macasieb’s Testimony to the Department of Education (Dec. 2021), <https://vetsedsuccess.org/student-veteran-submission-dru-macasieb-testimony-to-the-department-of-education/>.

<sup>4</sup> See the VA’s list of participating schools at <https://www.va.gov/education/other-va-education-benefits/veteran-rapid-retraining-assistance>.

<sup>5</sup> Veterans Education Success, Law Enforcement Actions Against Predatory Colleges, <https://vetsedsuccess.org/law-enforcement-actions-against-predatory-colleges/>.

The Subcommittee could consider limiting providers to public and nonprofit schools, because for-profit short-term programs are associated with the worst student outcomes and a high level of law enforcement concern, as we documented in our 2017 Issue Brief on the issue. Specifically, less than half of students at trade schools attended by GI Bill beneficiaries earned more than a high school graduate 10 years after enrolling.<sup>6</sup> Just over one-third of students who received federal student aid at a for-profit trade school earned more than a high school graduate within 10 years after enrolling, compared to 57% and 56% of such students who enrolled in public and nonprofit sector trade schools, respectively.<sup>7</sup>

Another safeguard the Subcommittee could consider would be to limit eligible providers to those that spend at least 50% of tuition on instruction. How much a provider spends on instruction is documented to directly impact student outcomes and is an important measure of the quality of education and students' ability to obtain employment.<sup>8</sup> It would also help Congress ensure taxpayer funds meant to educate veterans are actually spent educating the veteran.

Veterans Education Success sincerely appreciates the opportunity to express our views before the Subcommittee today.

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<sup>6</sup> See Walter Ochinko and Kathy Payea, *Weak Return on Trade Schools That Enroll GI Bill Beneficiaries* (Sept. 2019), <https://vetsedsuccess.org/weak-return-on-investment-at-trade-schools-that-enroll-gi-bill-beneficiaries/>.

<sup>7</sup> *Id.*

<sup>8</sup> See *Should Colleges Spend the GI Bill on Veterans' Education or Late Night TV Ads? And Which Colleges Offer the Best Instructional Bang for the GI Bill Buck?*, Veterans Education Success (Apr. 2019), <https://vetsedsuccess.org/should-colleges-spend-the-gi-bill-on-veterans-education-or-late-night-tv-ads-and-which-colleges-offer-the-best-instructional-bang-for-the-gi-bill-buck/>.